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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT SPEAKS OUT ON ETHYL HELLAS SITUATION

REF: THESSALONIKI 540

1. LOCAL MEDIA SEPT 9 FRONTPAGED JOINT STATEMENT BY MIN OF NORTHERN GREECE MARTIS AND MININD KONOFAGOS REFUTING PRESS ALLEGATIONS TRIGGERED BY LEFTIST MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEETING SEPT 5 (REFTEL) ON DANGERS OF ETHYL HELLAS PORT INSTALLATIONS TO COMMUNITY.

2. UNDER BANNER HEADLINES SUCH AS "MAKEDONIA'S" "THESSALONIKI IS RUNNING NO RISK WHATSOEVER" PRESS CARRIED MAJOR POINTS OF MINISTERS' ANNOUNCEMENT: 1) ETHYL TANKS POSE NO POLLUTION DANGER FOR PERSONS WORKING NEARBY, AND LEAD CONTENT IN AIR IS BELOW INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS; 2) IF TANKS WERE BOMBED OR DAMAGED THERE WOULD BE NO EXPLOSION OF CONTENTS AS HAD BEEN CHARGED, BUT LIQUID WOULD MERELY SETTLE TO SEA BOTTOM; ALLEGATIONS AS TO EXPLOSION, EVAPORATION OR CREATION OF POISONOUS CLOUD OVER CITY ARE "ABSURD AND FANTASTIC"; 3) TANKS WILL HOWEVER BE RELOCATED BY ETHYL FOR OTHER REASONS "WITHIN SHORT PERIOD OF TIME". ANNOUNCEMENT CONCLUDES THAT "FUSS IS ENTIRELY UNFOUNDED

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AND BEYOND ANY SCIENTIFIC REALITY" AND HAS HARMED COUNTRY'S

REPUTATION TO SERIOUSLY COPE WITH MODERN SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS.

3. DESPITE ANNOUNCEMENT, SOME PRESS ELEMENTS CONTINUED TO FULMINATE OVER ISSUE. "ELLINIKOS VORRAS" CHIEF EDITOR KYROU UNDER HEADING "THE BOMB OF THESSALONIKI" POINTED OUT THAT ANDREAS PAPANDREOU AS CU MIN OF COORDINATION HAD SIGNED ORIGINAL AGREEMENT IN 1964 WITH ETHYL AND NO GOVERNMENT SINCE HAD DARED TO SAVE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF THESSALONIANS FROM PERILS OF "UNHARNESSED MULTINATIONAL COMPANY". KYROU WROTE THAT RISK IS NOT WORTH \$30 MILLION IN FOREIGN CURRENCY RECEIPTS INVOLVED AND THAT BOTH STORAGE FACILITIES AND PLANT SHOULD BE REMOVED IMMEDIATELY TO "UNDO CRIME COMMITTED BY ANDREAS".

4. SAME PAPER REPORTED RETURN OF MIXED GOVERNMENT AND LABOR TEAM FROM INSPECTION TRIP TO ETHYL'S PLANTS AT CADIZ AND DORDRECHT (ROTTERDAM), (THESS 519) NOTING THAT ITS FINDINGS WOULD BE ISSUED SHORTLY.

5. COMMENT: ETHYL REPS HERE PROFESSED SATISFACTION AND APPRECIATION FOR MINISTERIAL STATEMENT, BUT FEEL, UNDOUBTEDLY CORRECTLY, THAT THE ISSUE WILL CONTINUE TO BE HANDY TOOL FOR THOSE WHO WISH ATTACK GOG AND/OR US.
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